



TEACHERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF KUPWARA DISTRICT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR STATE, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a detailed description of the teacher's attitude towards environmental education and sustainable development. A total of 100 teachers from 30 different secondary schools were selected and administered an attitude scale consisting of 30 items having both positive and negative statements. The sample consisted of high school teachers of Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir State, India and after analysis of the data, it was found that majority of the teachers have positive attitude towards environmental education and sustainable development.

Introduction

Environmental education is a process of developing a world population that is aware of and concerned about the total environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations and commitment to work individually and collectively towards solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones (UNESCO, 1976). The Intergovernmental conference on environmental education (UNESCO, 1978) recommended the primary categories of environmental education curriculum goals and objectives of: (a) awareness, (b) knowledge, (c) attitudes, (d) skills, and (e) participation. While these above components have been cited in many documents, articles, and books in the last decade (Athman & Monroe, 2000; Callicott & Rocha, 1996; Day & Monroe, 2000; Gough, 1997; Palmer, 1998), not all authors agree upon the degree of importance of one objective over the other. However, there are reoccurring concepts that are mentioned frequently in the literature, specifically awareness, knowledge and attitudes (Palmer 1998). The difference in objectives and goals stated by different authors, researchers, groups, and organizations do not present a unified approach to environmental education and curriculum development. Environmental education has been an area of concern in all curriculum development programmes in India. The National Policy on Education, 1986 (NPE) states that "Protection of the Environment" is a value which along with certain other values must form an integral part of curriculum at all stages of education. There is a paramount need to create a consciousness of the environment. It must permeate all ages and all sections of society, beginning with the child. Environmental consciousness should inform teaching in schools and colleges. This aspect will be integrated in the entire educational process".

The world is now alarmed with various environmental problems, such as climate change, ozone layer depletion, global warming, and so on. Many of these problems are the result of irresponsible environmental behavior, which is highly influenced by the attitudes people possess (Meinhold and Malkus, 2005; Ramsey and Rickson, 1976). In other words people's decision making is guided by the values and attitudes they possess (Rennie, 2005, 2007). Environmental attitudes are therefore a big concern in significant environmental education research (e.g. Bradley, Waliczek, and Zajicek, 1999; Clarke, 1996; Lee, 2008; Ridener, 1997). Consequently promoting environmental attitudes and knowledge has been considered as an important part of environmental education as suggested in the respective international conventions and charters.

"We hold the future in our hands together, we must ensure that our grandchildren will not have to ask why we failed to do the right thing, and let them suffer the consequences". UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 2007. In 2002, the proposal for establishing the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) was endorsed at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. The 57th session of the UN General Assembly later adopted the Decade by consensus, designating the years of the Decade as 2005-2014, and appointing the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the lead agency in coordinating the initiative. The Decade provides an opportunity for a focused effort on the widespread global implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The overall goal of the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development is to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects of learning to encourage changes in behavior that allow for a more sustainable and just society for all. At the Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, UN Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. Some of the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030 are to end poverty in all its forms and everywhere, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable eco-

nomie growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all and to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change).

The current research focused on the attitude of secondary school teachers of Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir State, India towards environmental education and sustainable development and to sensitize them about the various complex local environmental issues. The sample size consisted of 100 teachers of secondary schools of the district and the selected variables like gender, teaching experience, type of management of secondary schools, locality and stream of teachers were only taken into consideration. The researcher developed a five point attitude scale with slight modifications of the items from previous attitude scales used for similar enquiries (Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig, & Jones, 2000; Ernesto Lasso De Lavega, 2004) having equally positive and negative items regarding the attitude towards environmental education and sustainable development. The researcher collected the data by using descriptive type of survey method and simple random sampling procedure to select the sample (participants). The attitude scale for determining the attitude of secondary school teachers towards environmental education and sustainable development was administered on 100 teachers from thirty (30) different high schools of the district Kupwara of Jammu and Kashmir State, India.

Attitude Scale of Environmental Education and Sustainable Development

The purpose of this attitude scale is to have an opinion regarding the attitude of teachers towards environmental education and sustainable development. There are 30 questions to check the attitude of the teachers the details of which are in the questionnaire. A five point scale has been developed which is marked as: If Positive item/question, then scoring will be 5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree) and if Negative Item/question, then scoring will be 5= strongly disagree, 4= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 2=Agree, 1=Strongly Agree). There are 3 figures of this attitudinal scale Figure 1, Figure 2 & Figure 3 each having the ten questions.

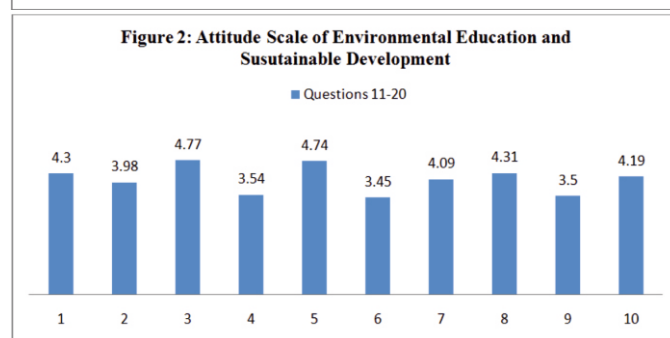
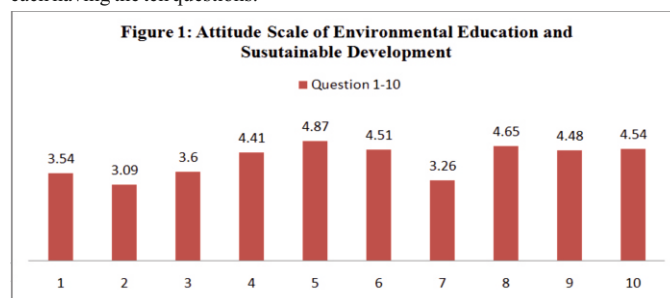
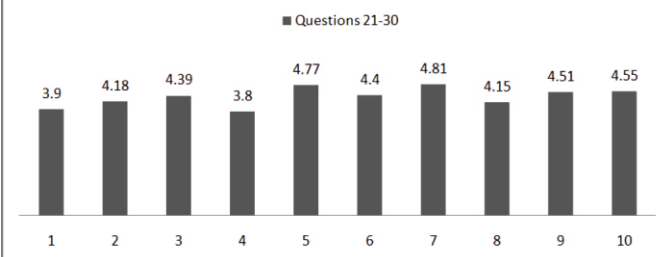


Figure 3: Attitude Scale of Environmental Education and Sustainable Development



Discussion and Conclusion

Environmental education is a new focus for education. It is a way of helping individuals and societies to resolve fundamental issues relating to the current and future use of the world's resources. However, simply raising awareness of these issues is insufficient to bring about change. Environmental education must strongly promote the need for personal initiatives and social participation to achieve sustainability. Environmental education, together with social legislation, sustainable management, and responsible actions by individuals and communities, is an important component of an effective policy framework for protecting and managing the environment. Sustainable development is the organizing principle for meeting human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depends. The desirable end result is a state of society where living conditions and resource use continue to meet human needs without undermining the integrity and stability of the natural systems. India is the only country to have passed one of the landmark judgments passed by the Supreme Court of the country directing all education boards to include environmental education (EE) as part of the formal education system at all levels. Besides, the different ministries of the Government of India, a large number of government and non-government organizations are diligently working to promote education for sustainable development. Most notable amongst them are Centre for Environment Education (CEE), The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI); Bharati Vidya Peeth (BVP); Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), and National Council of Education, Research and Training (NCERT). As we know that teachers are the builders of a nation, therefore, it is imperative upon them to be aware of the various facts about environmental education and sustainable development and should possess positive attitudes towards the various aspects of environmental education and sustainable development. Keeping this in view, the researcher developed a Likert type five point attitude scale to find out the attitude of secondary school teachers of district Kupwara of Jammu and Kashmir State, India, towards environmental education and sustainable development. A total of 100 teachers from 30 different high schools of the district were surveyed and accordingly the attitude scale was administered on them. After the analysis of the data and the comparison between the average response of the teachers to the positive and negative items of the attitude scale, it was found that majority of the sampled teachers (64.23%) have positive attitudes towards environmental education and sustainable development. The data shows that 72% of the sampled teachers are male and only 28% are females and a large chunk of the teachers (81%) are working in rural areas. Similarly, based on the teaching experience, type of management of the secondary schools and subject of specialization, the data reveals that majority of the surveyed teachers (45% belong to 0-5 years and 37% to 6-10 years of teaching experience) are young and energetic and are ready to take initiatives regarding environmental education, 61% & 39% are working in government and private sectors respectively and a large number of the sampled teachers have Science background i.e., 62% are science and only 38% are arts teachers.

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